



FRESHLY BAKED!

Benjamin Nachtigall, Xenia Ostrovskaya, Anna Steinhäusler

Exhibition opening: Wednesday April 19th 2017, 7pm

Venue: Loft8, Wassergasse 19, 1030 Wien

Duration: 20.04.2017 – 18.05.2017

Loft8 presents the works of three young artists, Benjamin Nachtigall, Xenia Ostrovskaya and Anna Steinhäusler, whose prevalent means of artistic expression became ceramics. They are rethinking this ancient art medium, which was for a long time considered craft, and explore its possibilities to convey their own distinctive artistic programme.

However, their approaches are rather different. At first sight, the Benjamins little figures are formally alike to the living room decorations of the *petite bourgeoisie*. However, his flocks of shameless fruit-headed nudists are in no way a new Biedermeier. In their self-involvement they expose to the viewer more than just their pink bare skin coated with a layer of glaze. A good observer can find in their postures and arrangements several quotations from art history or more obvious inspiration with the character of Harlequin from *commedia dell'arte*. These figures seem to be funny even in the bitter situations, when each one of them bears *the fruits* of their own actions.

Xenia, fascinated by the antiques, takes and uses ceramics as a felicitous carrier of certain histories and memories. The fragility of ceramics coincides with the fragile character of the memory, especially in the series made out of printed porcelain paper. She appreciates the tradition of the medium, but not in a rigid way. On the contrary, the series, which merge together music instruments and ceramic body fragments, is a witty visual and linguistic play with our anthropocentric perception of the world around us. The human flesh or recognizable body parts are coupled with the *neck* of the violin or with the *body* of the guitar, destroying their original purpose, which is normally carried out with the touch of their creators, who gave them their shape and name.

Anna, on the other hand, is keen on the versatility of the ceramic material. She is enchanted by a broad range of how soft and shiny or rough and coarse can



the surface of her sculptures be. These haptic qualities are not a materialistic manifestation *per se*, they are intended as a demonstration of the inner states of human being onto the surface. Similarly, her portraits are not an accurate depiction of the model. They are universal, reflecting those inner qualities, which the artist wants to highlight. Their structure is partially result of the imprints of various textures from nature, e.g. bark, onto the raw material of the clay.

The common denominators of these three different approaches are the fluidness, transformation and overlapping, including all their possible nuances. Between joke and critique, across the semantic systems and through the interplay of ideas and forms, the ceramics became not only material, but also a rich conceptual basis for the artworks of Nachtigall, Ostrovskaya and Steinhäusler.

For Further Inquiries:

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Fig. 1:

Benjamin Nachtigall, Picking up the pieces, Keramik glasiert, 50x50x45cm, 2015 © Benjamin Nachtigall

Fig. 2:

Xenia Ostrovskaya, A sketch with fish, Porzellanpapier/Unterglasurdruck, 20x30x5cm, 2013 © Xenia Ostrovskaya

Fig. 3:

Anna Steinhäusler, Verkörpert, Steinzeug glasiert, 22x16x20cm, 2017 © Anna Steinhäusler

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LOFT ACHT



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Wednesday - Saturday 13-18 h

and on appointment